



**SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS**

**Philosophy Programme  
PHIL 331 Philosophy of Language  
2009 TRIMESTER 1  
2 March to 5 June 2009**

Lecturers:

Edwin Mares (Course Coordinator)  
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Office Hours: Thursday 1:50-3pm

Lecture Times: 9am-12noon, Friday  
Location: Cotton Building, CO 119

### **Course Delivery**

This course will be delivered as lectures. Student participation is welcome during the lectures.

### **Communication of additional information**

Any additional information or changes to the course structure or content will be listed on the Blackboard site for this course.

### **Course content**

This is a course on contemporary philosophy of language. The course will begin with a discussion of distinction between how words or sentences refer (how they represent things in the world) and what they mean (how we understand them). In the first half of the course, we will discuss theories of reference. In the second half of the course, we will discuss theories of

meanings. In particular, we will look in depth at one influential theory of meaning (the “truth conditional theory of meaning”) and examine attacks on it.

### **Learning objectives**

Students passing the paper should be able to explain the central contemporary philosophies of language, and the key criticism of them. They should also be familiar with the key problems facing any philosophy of language.

### **Graduate attributes**

#### ***PHILOSOPHY***

As with all PHIL courses, learning objectives of this course contribute to the attainment of specific attributes in the areas of logical and critical thinking, conceptual analysis and rational and ethical decision-making. Please consult the Programme Prospectus 2009, p. 7, for more details or on our website <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/phil/degrees/index.aspx>

### **Expected workload**

In accordance with Faculty Guidelines, this course has been constructed on the assumption that students will devote 18 hours per week to PHIL 331. This includes 3 hours of lectures per week.

### **Readings**

#### **Essential texts:**

The central readings are in the course textbook:

A.P. Martinich (ed.), *The Philosophy of Language*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, fifth edition

Customers can order textbooks and student notes online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz). Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from the shop the day after placing an order online.

Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays)

10.00 am – 1.00 pm Saturdays.

Phone: 463 5515

### **Assessment requirements**

Final grades will be entirely determined by the marks on three essays, each worth 1/3 of the course grade. These essays are to be approximately 3000 words in length. They are due on the following dates:

Essay 1: Friday 3 April

Essay 2: Friday 15 May

Essay 3: Friday 12 June

### **Return of assignments**

Grades for students' essays will be available to them through Blackboard and the physical essays will be available for collection in the school office after they have been graded.

### **Penalties**

Students will be penalised for late submission of essays – a deduction of 5% for the first day late, and 2% per day thereafter, up to a maximum of 8 days. Work that is more than 8 days late can be accepted for mandatory course requirements but will not be marked. However, penalties may be waived if there are valid grounds (for example, illness [presentation of a medical certificate will be necessary] or similar other contingencies). In all such cases, prior information will be necessary.

### **Mandatory course requirements**

To gain a pass in this course each student must submit at least two of the essays and do well enough on them to get 50% in the course overall. This means that if a student turns in only two essays, he or she must obtain an average of an A- on those essays.

### **Statement on the use of Turnitin**

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <http://www.turnitin.com>. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.

### **Academic integrity and plagiarism**

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

## GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

This website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates.

### Outline of Lectures and Readings

**\* indicates readings that are not in the coursebook but are available in the school office.**

**Week 1:** 6 March: Introduction to Philosophy of Language, Locke, and Frege. Readings: chapter 14 and 42 in the textbook.

**Week 2:** 13 March: Problems with the theory of descriptions: Strawson and Donnellan. Readings: chapters 18 and 19. And the cluster theory.

**Week 3:** :20 March: The causal theory of Reference and the Direct Reference Theory of Meaning. Readings: chapters 21-24.

**Week 4 :**27 March: Demonstratives. Readings: chapters 25-27. And meaning scepticism. Readings: chapter 38 (optional readings 39-41)

**Week 5:** The Kripenstein problem. Readings: chapters 18 and 19 from the coursebook. And Linguistic Behaviourism.

**Week 6:** Theories of truth. Readings: notes to be available on Blackboard.

**Week 7:** 1 May: Introducing the truth-conditional theory of meaning. Readings: \*Cresswell, M.J., 1978, 'Semantic Competence', *Meaning and Translation* (ed. F. Guentner and M. Guentner-Reutter), London, Duckworth, pp.9-43 (Reprinted in *Semantical Essays*, 1988, pp.12-33) and textbook, Introduction §§VII, VIII, pp. 7-18

**Week 8:** 8 May: Speech Acts. Readings: \*Searle, J.R., 1969, *Speech Acts*, Cambridge, CUP, Chapter 6, 'Three fallacies in contemporary philosophy', pp. 131-155.

**Week 9:** 15 May: Grice. Readings: chapter 11 of textbook

**Week 10:** 22 May: Lewis. Readings: chapter 45.

**Week 11:** 29 May: Fiction and Meaning. \*Lewis, D.K., 1978, 'Truth in fiction', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol 15, pp.37-46

**Week 12:** 5 June: Metaphor. Readings: chapter 34